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New York's noisy food carts go electric in clean air trial



Food vendor William Arevalo poses for a picture in his electric battery powered food cart in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park on July 23, 2026 in New York City.

New York, United States

Walk around New York and you'll likely hear the chugging of petrol generators powering the city's tens of thousands of food carts. But not William Arevalo's.

His truck, selling hot dogs, empanadas and fried shrimp, runs on rechargeable batteries as part of a city pilot aimed at cutting harmful noise and air pollution by harnessing electric energy.

"I can't believe it. Now we don't have noise and all our equipment is still working," Arevalo, 59, told AFP from his food cart parked under the shade of trees in a Queens park. Arevalo is one of 10 street vendors testing whether they can ditch petrol generators to reduce noise, planet-warming emissions and health risks posed by exhaust fumes. It's a mammoth task: The vast majority of the city's 20,500 licensed food carts -- selling pretzels, peanuts and ice cream -- rely on generators to power stoves, freezers and ventilators.

Shifting all of them to electric power would be the same as taking around 30,000 cars off the road annually, according to the city council, but costs and infrastructure challenges lie ahead.

Arevalo, who is originally from Ecuador and whose family has run the food truck for over 20 years, has noticed several benefits after swapping out his petrol generator.

"All the smoke from the generator used to come inside the truck. It's really bad for our health. And sometimes when I was with a customer, I couldn't hear them because of the generator noise," he said.

"Now it's 100 percent better," Arevalo added from inside the cart, where several two-dollar bills are taped to a wall -- for good luck, he explained.

And on a hot July day, he said the batteries were far more reliable than fuel generators that can overheat and cut out during summer.

- 'Surprised' -

At the back of Arevalo's cart -- decorated all over with colorful menu pictures of chicken wings and coconut juice -- is an inverter that holds up to six, foot-long batteries.

He said those provide enough power to keep fries frozen and fans whirring as long as they are switched out every five hours or so.

The six-month pilot started in July and uses the same batteries as many electric bicycles. PopWheels, a New York startup, supplies and charges them at nearby fire-resistant lockers.

Similar trials have been short-lived in the past.

In 2013, New York hooked up some Manhattan street carts to the city's power grid -- it cut emissions and noise but there was no way to scale up.

And a pilot by the Street Vendor Project nonprofit deployed similar batteries to food trucks, but a lack of charging infrastructure proved an issue.

This time will be different, the council hopes, as it envisions a subscription-based model whereby vendors pay a fee to access batteries and charging stations.

"We think it's going to be cost competitive, either less than what vendors pay right now or about the same as what vendors pay on gas," said Isabela Brown, senior policy advisor at the mayor's climate office.

For vendors "the main cost... will be to have an inverter system installed. We're looking at financial solutions, loans, other things the city can provide," she added.

Inverter systems can cost thousands of dollars -- not dissimilar to petrol generators depending on the size -- but proponents say running costs are lower in the long run.

For now, Arevalo is delighted to be flaunting his electric street cart to fellow vendors who rely on petrol generators.

"I show my friends and they're surprised. Everything is working, it's really all working," he smiled. □

'Like a prisoner': Haitian migrants in U.S. face end of protected status

New York, United States

Tens of thousands of Haitians faced the prospect of leaving the United States or being deported, with the special protected status allowing them to live and work legally in the country set to expire on Monday.

The Supreme Court said last month the Trump administration could end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians and some 6,000 Syrians without judicial review, although the impact of the decision could apply to migrants from many other backgrounds.

An estimated 350,000 Haitians live in the United States under the program, with many working in healthcare and construction.

The president of the New York Nurses Association Nancy Hagans told AFP that thousands of her members would be unable to work following the end of TPS for Haitians from the end of Monday. "What the government just did was take resources not only from the hospitals, from the nursing homes, from the underserved communities (but) also taking away economic value from our communities," she said.

One Haitian healthcare worker in the US under TPS for many years said she was still deciding where to go next.

"You can't move. You're like a prisoner and you didn't do anything wrong," she told AFP, saying that the woman for whom she cared would "have a broken heart." Hagans, the union leader, said she had been advising members affected by the Supreme Court ruling to get their affairs in order in case they were swept up by immigration raids.

"We're telling them to get their papers in order. If they have money in the

bank to make sure they take the money. Some of them own homes. They've been here for 26, 27 years -- they built a life here." TPS provides protection from deportation for people from countries designated as unsafe because of war, natural disasters or other extraordinary circumstances.

- 'Uncertainty' -

On Wednesday, a Republican senator blocked an effort by congressional Democrats to extend TPS for Haitians.

Since Donald Trump's return to the presidency in 2025, as part of his fierce crackdown on immigration, his administration has revoked TPS for migrants from more than a dozen countries, including Venezuela, Nicaragua, Honduras and Somalia.

New York-based Haitian American artist Lyne Lucien said "one of the hardest parts of this decision is the uncertainty it creates."

"Many people in the Haitian diaspora are worried about what this means for their families and whether returning to Haiti is safe or realistic given the current conditions," she added.

"There is also concern about families being separated."

Haiti for decades has suffered from abject poverty, corruption, political instability and natural disasters like a devastating earthquake in 2010.

Its last president was assassinated in 2021 and has not been replaced. Haiti has not held an election of any kind since 2016. It is the poorest country in the Americas. Since early 2024, Haiti has also been suffering a wave of violence and other crime from powerful gangs that control nearly all of Port-au-Prince and the country's main roads. □

Make smoking cool again? Pop culture reboots the vice

New York, United States

From beauty mogul Kylie Jenner lighting up on the cover of Vanity Fair to cigarette trays at singer Dua Lipa's wedding, the pop culture-verse has rebooted cigarettes as the accessory du jour, health risks be damned.

Smoking rates are at a six-decade low among American adults and the lowest in a quarter-century among youth.

And yet, searches for the term "smoking pose" on the image-sharing platform Pinterest have soared 70 percent among 18- to 24-year-olds, according to Style Analytics, a fashion world data tracker.

On Instagram, the account "Cigfluencers" shares images of celebrities smoking -- "your favorite smoker's favorite smokers," reads the tagline.

The posts included a number of shots snapped in May at the Met Gala, the annual gathering of A-listers in New York.

Even though current U.S. smoking statistics don't show an increase in the actual habit, making cigarettes chic again has triggered concern among anti-smoking advocates.

"Pop culture's glamorization of smoking is just reigniting the addiction among young people and discouraging those trying to quit," Jessica Rath, vice president



at the anti-tobacco advocacy group Truth Initiative, told AFP.

- 'Highly concerning' -

The organization noted that eight of the 10 feature films nominated for this year's best picture Oscar contained images of tobacco use.

This type of exposure makes young people two to three times more likely to use tobacco products, Rath said. Brian King, head of U.S. programs at the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said the trend is "highly concerning from a public health perspective."

One explanation for the resurgence is the return of aesthetics from the 1990s

and early 2000s -- an era when smoking was still quite common in the United States.

The look was all over the recent popular series "Love Story," a show that detailed the storied relationship of the late John F. Kennedy Jr and Carolyn Bessette -- the latter was a regular smoker and was portrayed as such on the show.

The brand strategy newsletter On Brand has dubbed the smoker's aesthetic an act of rebellion against the social media pressures of "self-optimization."

And it's all set, of course, against a backdrop of economic and geopolitical uncertainty.

"Right now, we're also hav-

ing kind of a colliding mental health crisis with young people," said Rath.

"And so young people are thinking that using nicotine is helping their feelings of anxiety, depression, and stress -- when really it could be making it worse."

King noted that public attention has shifted away from the risks associated with conventional cigarettes, as e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products and nicotine pouches grow in popularity.

"In some cases, we as society have been recalcitrant in terms of remembering those risks, and also importantly implementing policies that we know work to prevent the use of these

products," King said.

- 'De-normalize smoking' -

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has made significant cuts to smoking prevention and cessation support programs.

And the previous administration under Joe Biden backed off its plan to ban menthol cigarettes, which are popular among young people.

King said that in the U.S., the tobacco industry spends the equivalent of approximately \$1 million an hour on marketing and promotion.

Nonprofits and anti-smoking organizations lack data on how tobacco companies might be pushing the "cigfluencer" phenomenon.

But it's critical, King said, that the United States works to "de-normalize smoking" in the face of such trends.

Society must "not be doing anything that could potentially reverse the considerable progress that we've made in reducing smoking over many decades," he said.

Along with traditional methods of discouraging smoking -- public service messaging, cessation support, price hikes, and smoking bans -- Rath recommends working with platforms and Hollywood to discourage the habit. □

U.S. envoy quits UN Security Council meeting to protest France comments



France's U.N. Ambassador Jerome Bonnafont speaks as the United Nations Security Council holds an emergency meeting on the Ukraine-Russia war at UN Headquarters in New York, on July 27, 2026.

United Nations, United States

The United States walked out of a U.N. Security Council

meeting Monday when France's ambassador took the floor, protesting French comments comparing the

U.S. to North Korea and other authoritarian states regarding votes on human rights.

Dan Negrea, an alternate representative to the General Assembly and a senior U.S. delegation official, slammed what he called "disingenuous grandstanding" by Paris.

"There is a member of this council that will feign moral outrage and pretend to lecture the rest of us about every topic, whether it's about the very conflict we're discussing yet again today, or even those unrelated to international peace and security,

like human rights," Negrea said.

"That is why we walked out during France's intervention" at the meeting, which focused on the war in Ukraine.

Such a walkout from the Security Council, the U.N.'s highest decision-making body where both France and the United States are veto-wielding permanent members, is very rare. On Friday the United States was one of 10 countries to vote in the General Assembly against extending Volker Turk's term as U.N. high commissioner for human rights, joining the ranks of North Korea, Russia and

Nicaragua, among others.

"The U.S. used to be a beacon of human rights. Not anymore," France's mission to the United Nations in Geneva posted in English after Friday's vote.

"Today, it stands alongside North Korea, Nicaragua, Mali & Russia, isolated. And the world no longer listens to it."

In his remarks Monday, Negrea said: "I remind them that it is the United States that remains the beacon of liberty for the world. As such, we will not be affording them the benefit of listening to their politicized drivel." □



‘The Odyssey’: Christopher Nolan’s latest cultural phenomenon

San Diego, United States Christopher Nolan’s star-studded adaptation of “The Odyssey” has quickly become his latest box office success, capturing audiences and generating conversation around the world.

As movie buffs clamor to special-format theaters, and social media feeds are flooded with memes and reactions including by the world’s richest man the latest take on the millennia-old mythological tale has become its own kind of epic.

Here are some key points on the cultural phenomenon that is “The Odyssey”:

- ‘Film’ fanatics -

Nolan’s choice to shoot “The Odyssey” entirely on bulky IMAX film cameras a first for a feature-length fictional film has been a key feature of the movie’s marketing campaign, to much apparent success. The special 70mm celluloid is touted as having ultra-high resolution and capturing an unusually wide frame, qualities Nolan says are best experienced by seeing a projection of physical film, not the contemporary standard digital format.

However, only a few dozen theaters in the world have systems to project IMAX 70mm film, while regular 70mm film projectors are also rare.

Predicting high demand among Nolan’s fans to see the Oscar winner’s latest work on film, US chain Phoenix Theatres went to work adding a 70mm projector to one of its cinemas in Ohio, senior vice president Jordan Hohman told AFP.

“That equipment was not easy to come by. We purchased it from the Canadian government months ago” and worked to refurbish it “back to its former glory,” he said.

“That has paid off really well for us because there are a lot of people out there that are seeking that 70 millimeter presentation.”

Fans are flocking to normal digital presentations too, Phoenix Theatres president Cory Jacobson noted.

“It’s just huge. It’s an enormous movie,” he said.

- Audiobook boom -

With the film’s release, some audio streaming platforms have also flagged a corresponding spike in interest in the audiobook form of Homer’s epic.

Spotify reported a surge in interest in audiobook translations of “The Odyssey”: searches skyrocketed by 310 percent, with Gen Z and millennials leading the demand.

“With its themes of masculinity, legacy, and brotherhood, combined with the cinematic scale of Christo-

pher Nolan’s adaptation, it’s a natural gateway into grand, high-stakes storytelling. Move over the Roman Empire the Greeks are back,” Spotify book editor Roshni Radia told The Irish Times.

Audiobook platform ElevenReader, whose investors include actor Matthew McConaughey, even launched a version last month narrated by an AI-generated voice modeled after Michael Caine.

- Meme-ery -

Nolan, who famously does not carry a smartphone, is likely missing out on much of the online reaction to his movie.

Clips from the film, such as Matt Damon’s Odysseus tied to the mast of his ship while listening to the sirens’ song, have quickly become fodder for social media memes.

After “Saving Private Ryan,” “The Martian” and “Interstellar,” many jokes have also been made about Damon once again starring in a film in which his character struggles to get home.

- Musk ire -

But the online chatter has not been all light-hearted. Tech titan Elon Musk, divisive as ever, has taken to X on multiple occasions to criticize the film, which in his opinion has “desecrated” the story. □



U.S. singer Olivia Rodrigo performs under a photo of Carly Simon, on stage during the 37th Annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at the Microsoft Theatre on November 5, 2022, in Los Angeles, California.

Singer Carly Simon diagnosed with Parkinson’s: statement

New York, United States

American singer Carly Simon, known for hits like “You’re So Vain,” revealed on Monday that she has been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease.

The 83-year-old confessional lyricist said in a statement that she had “been learning how to live with Parkinson’s disease” and that she had also been treated for skin cancer.

Parkinson’s disease is a chronic, degenerative neurological disorder that affects the body’s motor system, often causing shaking and other difficulties in movement.

Worldwide, about 10 million people have the illness, according to the Parkinson’s Foundation.

“It has taken me some time to understand the diagnosis, to adjust to it, and to decide how much I wanted to say about it publicly,” Simon wrote.

“Parkinson’s is different for everyone, and it can be unpredictable. Some days I’m so tired I can’t get the day moving at all. On others, it gives me a little more room to move, think, work, and feel like myself.

“The problems began with arthritis in both knees and one hip. I eventually had all three joints replaced, out with the old and in with delicate bouquets of metal and plastic.”

After three replacement surgeries, she said, “I assumed my difficulty walking was simply an unfortunate and rather ironic part of the recovery process.”

The celebrated singer-songwriter said she had found sanctuary in music, and that during that period she even began recording a new album, “Comes in Waves,” her first new collection of original tracks since 2008, to be released on August 14.

Simon said that at the same time as her Parkinson’s diagnosis, she was treated for a facial basal cell carcinoma.

“The cancer was removed, but the surgery affected my appearance and made me more self-conscious about being seen in public,” she said in a heartfelt statement.

“I have always been more critical of my appearance than anyone else could possibly imagine (check out the irony of having written ‘You’re So Vain’), and this gave my inner critic quite a lot of new material.”

Simon began singing with her sister in the 1960s. She rose to global stardom with her 1972 album “No Secrets,” which spawned the number one smash “You’re So Vain.”

In 1977 she sang “Nobody Does it Better,” the popular James Bond theme song from “The Spy Who Loved Me.” □

Vienna's venerable vineyard taverns forced to move with the times

Vienna, Austria

Hospitality veteran Clemens Keller insists that Vienna's storied "heuriger" winemakers' taverns -- which face a hangover-inducing brew of real estate speculation, spiraling costs and climate change -- cannot rely on their illustrious past.

"Whoever does not move with the times will disappear in time," the 42-year-old managing director told AFP.

He was speaking from the shaded courtyard garden of his Mayer am Pfarrplatz heuriger, down the steps from the room where Beethoven stayed while composing part of the Ninth Symphony.

Vienna's heurigers range from a few tables set up in the open air to grander affairs resembling restaurants. For centuries, they have dished up wine from the surrounding vineyards to wash down typically hearty central European fare.

Just as they did in Beethoven's time, euphoric revelers still spill out onto the paths of the otherwise sleepy outskirts in the vine-lined Viennese hill-sides after a few carafes of white- or red-wine spritzers. But despite their beloved place in Viennese life -- the tradition gained UNESCO world heritage status in 2019 -- their ranks have dwindled from 512 taverns in 1956 to fewer than 100 in 2015.



Clemens Keller, owner of Mayer am Pfarrplatz Heuriger, a wine-tavern or garden-bar selling typical Austrian fare and wine from the establishment's own vineyards, presents bottles of wine during an interview with AFP in Vienna, Austria, on July 14, 2026.

"I think this decline is very regrettable," Tariq Lenny Bas, who grew up among the grapevines of western Austria, told AFP. He was at Mayer am Nussberg, a Keller-run heuriger perched on a hill overlooking the capital, as part of a team-bonding trip with his social media firm. "And the trend continues," said cultural anthropologist Peter Hoerz. "Inclusion on the UNESCO list is a warning sign -- after all, whatever is listed there is invariably at risk of extinction!"

- 'Adapt or fail' -

While adamant that the tradition would survive, Keller pointed to a "succession problem", with younger generations unwilling to take over a tough family business. For Jutta Ambrositsch, a pioneering figure among the new wave of Viennese winemakers, "the major problem is insensitive and careless real estate development in the 'heurigen areas'".

Hoerz agreed that Vienna's picturesque winemaking suburbs have become victims of their own success, with

their popularity pushing up land prices. "If a winemaker receives a multi-million-euro offer for their buildings and facilities today, the temptation to give up the business is immense," he added. He argued that the state should shield them from developers. Anastasia Rentifi, whose PhD research at the University of West Attica in Athens is dedicated to the traditional taverns, also listed "rising operating costs, increasing economic pressure, labour shortages, (and) growing bureaucracy" as commonly

cited reasons for packing it in. On top of that, Vienna's heurigers are seeing their grapes buffeted by ever-more extreme weather, which scientists have long blamed on climate change. The recent June heatwave was Austria's longest-ever for the month.

"Adapt or fail" is Ambrositsch's stark conclusion, which has led her to plant different varieties more resistant to the heat, and to change how she treats the soil.

Keller, for his part, has stepped up irrigation work on his land.

- The heuriger 'reimagined' -

For Ambrositsch and Keller, the key to survival lies in navigating those challenges while refreshing the age-old formula. Ambrositsch, for example, is proud that her heuriger brings together "19-year-old hipsters and 91-year-old widows" at the same table.

Novelties at Mayer am Nussberg that would have bamboozled Keller's ancestors include vegan food, alcohol-free wine -- of which Keller offers four sorts -- and self-service order touchscreens. "I think my grandmother would have given me a proper telling-off if she'd been told she had to reserve online at the heuriger!" he joked. □

D-Day beaches inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List

Rennes, France

UNESCO on Sunday added the iconic D-Day landing beaches in Normandy to its World Heritage List, marking the culmination of a project launched nearly two decades ago.

Stretching for more than 80 kilometres (50 miles) of France's northwestern coast, Allied forces landed on the beaches on June 6, 1944 to fight a decisive battle to liberate Europe from Nazism and end World War II.

The nomination included the five D-Day beaches known by their code names: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. A dwindling number of veterans visit each year and world leaders congregate

there on key anniversaries. "This decision places a responsibility upon us," said Herve Morin, president of the Normandy Region.

"It compels us to preserve this property, to protect it, to cherish it even more, and to promote its value," he added.

The D-Day landings join more than 50 French sites already inscribed on the list, alongside the spectacular Mont Saint Michel island in Normandy and the Palace of Versailles.

Recognition of their "outstanding universal value" brings international renown and commits authorities to work toward their preservation.

Greece meanwhile wel-

comed the inclusion of Mount Olympus, its highest mountain, a protected nature reserve and, according to Greek mythology, home to the gods of antiquity, on UNESCO's list. The mountain is also one of Europe's most biodiverse areas and home to rare wildlife.

"From today, the mythical Mount Olympus becomes a mountain belonging to all of humanity," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis wrote on Facebook.

UNESCO also accorded World Heritage status to 18 historic 18th and 19th-century condominium-style theatres in the Italian regions of Emilia Romagna, Marche and Umbria.

Italian Culture Minister Ales-



French troops disembark from a U.S. landing craft during a joint US and French amphibious landing operation showcase, on June 4, 2024, at Omaha beach in Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, northwestern France, ahead of the "D-Day" commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of the World War II Allied landings in Normandy.

sandro Giuli Rome noted the decision to mark the theatres' contribution to

their regions' cultural and social life "with pride and satisfaction." q

In Ghana, one man's race to save critically endangered fish

Apam, Ghana

As dawn breaks over Ghana's Atlantic coast, artisanal fishing boats return to shore with last night's catch -- baskets of snapper, crabs, rays and a distinct-looking fish locals call "esene".

Once abundant along Ghana's shores, esene, or guitarfish -- with the flattened body of a ray and the tail of a shark -- have become increasingly difficult to find. For conservationist Issah Seidu, 36, every landing is a reminder that time is running out to save the endangered species.

After studying terrestrial wildlife, he visited coastal fishing communities in 2018 and encountered what scientists describe as one of the world's least-known conservation crises.

"We came to these communities and saw piles of sharks, rays and guitarfish being landed without any thought about conservation," Seidu told AFP.

"That was the moment I realised somebody had to do something," said the wildlife biologist, who never dreamt of a career revolving around the sea.

Guitarfish -- relatives of both sharks and rays -- are among the world's most threatened marine fish, red-listed as "critically endangered" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Their meat is a delicacy widely eaten locally, while their fins command high



Dr. Issah Seidu, Founder of Aqualife Conservancy, poses for a photograph in Adwoa, in the western region of Ghana on June 23, 2026.

prices in international markets.

Across west Africa, populations have collapsed.

Sawfish may have already disappeared from Ghana's waters and wedgefish, another close relative, have become increasingly scarce.

Seidu fears guitarfish could be next.

- Winning over fishermen -

The biggest challenge has been persuading fishermen to stop catching one of their most valuable species. Seidu's NGO Aqualife Conservancy has helped boost knowledge about conservation.

And instead of simply ask-

ing fishermen to stop, it has helped develop snail farming as an alternative livelihood.

Today, rows of giant African snails crawl inside wooden pens in Adjoa, a coastal community where fishing families are testing the new source of income.

"The fishermen themselves selected snail farming," said Seidu -- and they cannot meet the demand.

Edward Afful, a fisherman of 20 years, says shrinking catches have left many crews struggling to recover the cost of fuel for their boats.

He now raises snails alongside fishing.

"If we had started this years

ago, everyone would have benefitted," he said.

- Locals map the sea -

In a historic first, Ghana in April designated a 703-square-kilometre (271-square-mile) stretch of the Atlantic Ocean as a marine protected area (MPA) to be co-managed by coastal communities and national government.

"There are very unique species in the area that need to be protected, including the guitarfish," said University of Ghana's Francis Nunoo, a professor in fisheries science. As policymakers in the capital put the finishing touches to the design and implementation of the national

MPA, Seidu and local fishermen in Adjoa and Apam, several hours' drive from Accra, are already showing what it can look like.

They have created their own "locally managed marine area".

Seidu equipped fishermen with GPS trackers to identify where guitarfish gather and spawn.

Together they have mapped about 15 square kilometres of critical habitat.

"The fishermen are the custodians of these places," Seidu said. "They know where the species congregate and where the nursery grounds are."

In Apam, trader Evelyn Akorful, 41, has seen catches fluctuate with the seasons but has nevertheless noticed a steady decline over the years.

"Now we don't get as much as before," she said, blaming destructive fishing methods, particularly the use of lights at sea, for the depleting stocks.

For her family, every catch counts. Sales of guitarfish, crabs and other species help pay school fees and household expenses.

"If we don't get one fish, we try another. We survive by mixing everything," she said, dangling two freshly caught guitarfish from her hands. Older residents have seen stocks decline over decades. □

Explosions, red flags: Chinese tourists reenact communist victory



This photo taken on July 25, 2026 shows a tourist in a costume posing for a photo in front of a wall which reads "Fight the revolution through to the end" at Loushan Pass in Zunyi, in southwestern China's Guizhou Province.

Zunyi, China

Dressed in Red Army uniforms and waving prop

weapons, scores of tourists stormed a mound in southwestern China's Loushan

Pass as pyrotechnics lit up the hillside in a reenactment of a historic battle.

More than 1,000 people visited the mountainous battle site in Guizhou province over the weekend to relive the pivotal 1935 conflict between communist and nationalist forces -- an experience that has become a hit on Chinese social media.

"It was truly awe-inspiring -- it felt as though I was actually right there in the thick of the battle," 40-year-old tourist Jiang Jun told AFP.

"I felt as though I could experience what those martyrs must have felt back then."

The reenactment is part

of Beijing's decades-long push to develop "red tourism", which draws tourists fascinated by the country's communist history to key landmarks.

The battle -- recounted by actors playing historical figures -- took place during the Long March when Mao Zedong's communist fighters broke through Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist forces.

A platoon of squealing children as young as five dressed in Red Army costumes raised toy swords and ran up the hill to capture positions held by the nationalist Kuomintang, victoriously raising bright red flags.

Smoke billowed at their feet as "bombs" went off beside them.

The capture of Loushan Pass marked the Red Army's first major victory against the nationalists, an occasion Mao sought to immortalise in a poem.

Xu, a participant who travelled from neighbouring Guangxi province, said it was important to memorialise such locations.

If Mao's forces had not broken through nationalist lines at Loushan Pass, "we wouldn't have the new China that we have today and our standard of living wouldn't be so good", he told AFP. □

It's Tern season, and ACF is calling for their protection

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba has begun to see terns arriving along its coast to start their breeding season once again. An event that happens every year, the migration of terns to our island normally begins in March, but this year it was observed that they were already present as early as January.

In Aruba, there are ten different species of terns that normally breed from March to September every year. However, ACF has noted that this year their arrival came earlier, and by the end of January a presence of terns was already being seen in their breeding areas. During this season, ten different species breed at different times. This is the reason why the season lasts for more than half a year.

The terns breed mainly in the Baby Beach area and



along the north coast of Aruba. Baby Beach is a particularly special site for terns, since this is where they carry out their reproduction rituals. Referred to as a "discotheque" by Natasha Silva, the point of Baby Beach near the open water is where a large group of terns spends the season searching for their partner for life to reproduce.

Terns are very fragile and

easily disturbed, especially during their reproduction rituals.

Their nests are divided into two specific sites on our island. The first is the reefs near the refinery in San Nicolas. These reefs become home to the terns, where they lay their nests either on the sand or in the small bushes around the reefs. These reefs are "off-limits" to the public; one of

the only areas in Aruba that is completely protected by law.

The terns also lay eggs along the north coast of our island, between cliffs and rocks throughout the area. This is where they are vulnerable to greater danger, according to ACF. Among these cliffs, everything is well camouflaged and cannot easily be seen, even by people who are walking or driving vehicles over the rocks.

The chicks have a natural behavior to "freeze" in place when they sense danger. This puts them at risk of being stepped on. For this reason, ACF is making a call to the community and authorities to help protect our historic birds.

As general advice, ACF says to keep distance and be cautious when pass-

ing through areas where terns are breeding. "If a tern starts screaming at you, that is a sign that you are too close to their nest and eggs," Silva explained. These are the types of signals the Aruba community needs to be aware of.

So once again, a call goes out to the entire community of Aruba: Let's protect our terns during an important season for them. Educate yourself and others about the birds, stay alert to harmful activities near nests, and share information with ACF if you notice anything unusual in nature. Together we can care for and strengthen our nature, and that begins with education.

Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF) can be reached by phone at 585-1234 or by email at info@acf.aw □

Up for a snorkeling adventure in Aruba? Top 3 shipwrecks to explore

(ORANJESTAD) – Aruba is not only the perfect vacation destination to sit back and relax on the sandy beaches but also has great snorkeling spots for passionate adventurers to explore. On the coast of the island, there are various shipwrecks that have become fan-favorites over the years. Here are the top 3 shipwrecks you should explore.

SS Antilla

Dubbed "The Ghost Ship", SS Antilla is the biggest and most visited shipwreck site off the coast of the island. Located in Malmok, this 400-foot ship's story is one of capture and sabotage during WWII.

After Germany invaded The Netherlands, Dutch authorities ordered the confinement of the ship's German crew, who were ported in Aruba because it needed to find a neutral port. The Dutch ordered the ship to be confiscated, but the German crew had other plans. Taking advan-

tage of a delay caused by an anticipated armed resistance, the Germans started scuttling the ship, opening her seacock and setting her ablaze.

Eventually, the crew was arrested, but SS Antilla could not be saved by the Dutch forces. The Dutch fired two rounds of their 35mm gun aboard the 'Aruba' at SS Antilla and left her to sink.

The shipwreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you'll be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the shipwreck alone is already impressive enough.

SS Pedernales

Like the Antilla, the story of SS Pedernales dates to WWII. Pedernales was used as a lake tanker between Venezuela and Aruba, and sailed under British Flag. At this time, The US and Britain were using Aruba and Curacao as fuel stations for

the war ships.

Under operation Neuland (disruption of British and American oil sources), Germany fleets bombed Pedernales. The ship was later cut into three sections, two of which were taken to the US for reconstruction. The remaining part stayed in Aruba and was used as target practice. Eventually, the ship became a snorkeling site that has attracted many visitors throughout the years.

Pedernales lies on the north-west coast of Aruba, and is no more than 10 feet under water, making it an ideal site for snorkelers and divers of all levels.

Jane Sea Wreck

The Jane Sea Wreck lies near Palm Island at 100 feet underwater. Jane's story is heavily speculated, making her origin a tale of legends.

Launched in 1959, the 190-foot ship was initially called "Blackthorn". Her last



owner, S&D Shipping Ltd. named her Jane Sea. Jane was a cement freighter between Venezuela and Aruba.

The story goes that the Jane Sea arrived one day at the Barcadera Harbor, where Aruban customs discovered several tons of cocaine. The ship was confiscated and petitioned went out for her owner to claim her. However, several years went by and no one came forward to claim the ship, so dive operators decided to sink her as an artificial reef. This happened in 1988. Jane Sea earned the nick name Jane C, because of the illicit white powder discovered on board.

Jane is now beautifully overgrown with coral and is home to a diverse set of marine life, like turtles, octopus, crabs and sometimes even nurse sharks.

The stories behind these shipwrecks enriches their exploration and offers snorkelers and divers a glance into the past, as well as the beautiful marine life that have molded these wrecks into their home. So, grab your equipment and discover another side of what Aruba has to offer!

We highly recommend you embark on your adventure with the guide of a professional and be sure to take of yourself and Aruba's precious nature. □



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Po-Ké Ono Brings Bold Asian Fusion to Aruba's Dining Scene

Innovative eatery blends island culture with modern Asian cuisine



Oranjestad, Aruba – In a culinary landscape known for its diversity and creativity, **Po-Ké Ono** stands out as a vibrant and contemporary addition to Aruba's restaurant scene. With locations at Azure in Palm Beach and the Renaissance Marketplace in Oranjestad, the concept introduces a refreshing take on Asian fusion dining—casual in style, yet refined in execution.

Established in 2020, Po-Ké Ono was envisioned as a space where flavor, culture, and creativity intersect. The menu features an array of signature dishes including poke bowls, steamed bao, and sushi, crafted with precision and a focus on freshness. Drawing on Asian influences, the restaurant delivers bold flavors in an approachable format, appealing to a broad audience of locals and visitors alike.

The ambiance is designed to be welcoming and relaxed, with a philosophy centered

around accessibility and enjoyment. Whether dining indoors or grabbing a quick bowl on the go, guests can expect a consistently high standard in both service and cuisine. With extensive menu options, including selections for vegan diners, Po-Ké Ono caters to a wide range of tastes and dietary preferences.

While the concept leans into fast-casual dining, the quality of ingredients and thoughtful



preparation reflect fine-dining roots. Many of the restaurant's core ingredients are sourced locally, emphasizing sustainability and support for Aruba's agricultural community. The result is a dining experience that honors both the island's spirit and the culinary traditions it draws inspiration from. Open daily from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Po-Ké Ono continues to gain recognition as one of the island's premier destinations for sushi, poke, and bao. Its growing popularity is a

testament to Aruba's evolving food culture—one that embraces global influence while staying rooted in community and craft.

For those seeking a modern taste of Asia in the heart of the Caribbean, Po-Ké Ono offers a flavorful and memorable experience worth exploring. □



Dining in? Try making some local favorites!

How to make “pan bati”



(Oranjestad)—If you're ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

Ingredients:

2 cups of all purpose flour
1 cup grams of fine cornmeal
2 tbsp baking powder
1 1/3 cup of milk
1 pinch of salt
2 tbsp of granulated sugar
Oil for cooking

Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl first,

and stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moister is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top! □

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YOU COULD BE HERE

Casago^{Aruba}

Casago Aruba: Redefining Island Stays with Full-Service Property Management



Casago Aruba was born from a shared passion for elevating the island's tourism experience. Built on a strong foundation of service, hospitality, and a keen eye for quality, the Casago team—backed by over 16 years of experience in the vacation rental and hospitality industry—is on a mission to redefine what luxury and convenience look like for travelers visiting Aruba.

But Casago is more than just a vacation rental platform. It is a **full-service property management company**, offering seamless experiences



for both guests and homeowners alike. While travelers benefit from handpicked accommodations and personalized service, homeowners gain a reliable partner dedicated to the care and performance of their property.

A Stay Tailored to You

Casago Aruba offers more than just stylish villas. Their curated portfolio includes a **wide variety of condos, homes, and villas** in different sizes to suit all types of travelers—from solo adventurers and couples to large families and groups. Every stay is backed by local expertise, with concierge support, 24/7 guest assistance, and an attention to detail that consistently exceeds expectations.

Whether you're here to relax on world-famous beaches, explore Aruba's cultural gems, or discover hidden corners of the island, Casago Aruba ensures your getaway is as smooth as it is memorable.

A Partner for Homeowners

Behind the scenes, Casago offers a robust suite of property management services designed to help homeowners

maximize rental income while minimizing stress. Services include:

- **Promotion** through Casago's professional booking platform and expert local marketing strategies
- **Complete management** of check-ins, guest communication, cleanings, landscaping, pool maintenance, and repairs
- **Transparent maintenance** reporting, real-time reservation tracking, and on-site security monitoring
- **Full handling** of tax filings for both local and state requirements
- **Monthly property inspections** and full utility bill management
- **Strategic planning** to help homeowners increase profitability and keep their properties in top condition

This full-service model ensures that every home is maintained to the highest standard while giving property owners full peace of mind.

Rooted in Community and Sustainability

What truly sets Casago Aruba apart is their commitment



to the local community and to sustainable practices. The team works closely with local businesses and artisans, promotes eco-conscious travel, and supports initiatives that contribute positively to the island's environment and economy.

As one of the fastest-growing vacation rental and property management companies on the island, Casago Aruba continues to expand its footprint—welcoming more travelers, partnering with more homeowners, and raising the standard of hospitality in Aruba. □

Ever heard of the cah'i orgel? A key instrument in Aruban folklore music

(Oranjestad)—The **cah'i orgel music box is an important and unique instrument that is used on the ABC islands in the Dutch Caribbean. This instrument is a staple in our folklore music, and its significance in the traditions of Aruba has and continues to bring together the old and young.**

The origin of the cah'i orgel is said to have come from Europe around 150 years ago. A cross breed between the barrel piano and the organ, the most popular stories said that the instrument

came from either England or Germany, but made its way to Italy down to Venezuela, where in 1881, Mr. Horatio Sprock (1866-1949) from Curacao was first introduced to it. After that, Sprock made his own cah'i orgel "Josefina", and successfully debuted it on the streets of Barquisimeto. Back in Curacao, he started his own cah'i orgel business along with his brother Luis. In Aruba, it is said that the cah'i orgel was introduced by Rufo Wever, who later in his career became one of the composers for the Aru-

ban national anthem.

Rufo Wever was a young musician in 1937 when he established his own cah'i orgel business on the island. Before that he experimented with his uncle's cah'i orgel, and he over the years he learned to build and repair the instrument. In fact, he was incredibly skilled in this, and he was one of the few to have recognized from the start that the cah'i orgel is an instrument that needs preserving.

As mentioned, the cah'i or-

gel is a music box. Made from mahogany wood, it contains a cylinder with a maximum of eight music pieces. By rotating the lever on the front side of the box, the cah'i orgel produces music similar to that of a piano, and is accompanied often by someone else playing the "wiri", a percussion instrument made out of steel and reminiscent to the Spanish guiro. Back then, you would often also find someone playing the triangle alongside the cah'i orgel and wiri. In Aruba, the cah'i orgel and wiri is used for traditional music genres,



such as the Aruban waltz, tumba, mazurka and more.

Fun fact: another name for the cah'i orgel is the "tingilingi box." □

Source: "E Cilinder Magico entre Aruba y Curaçao" by Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé, Herta Parabirsing-Balentina and Nidia Rosaria-Wallé.

Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names

Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn not only the beautiful names but the history behind it that gives it life and meaning.

Anabui/Tierra Del Sol

This neighborhood can be seen on Van Raders map and Werbata as Anna Boei. Anna Boei is a name of which there isn't much information about its origin.

The best historians were able to deduce is that this name came to be because of a miscommunication between Van Spengler and the natives who were living on the island. In the Arawak/Taino language one can find the word Anaiboa, which consists of Ana meaning flower or the best and Iboa; the juice of a cassava, which together would mean "the best juice of a cassava".



If one assumes that the actual word heard was Ana-boio instead, consisting of Ana meaning the best and Boio (bohio); house, the iteration of Anabui would mean "the best house." This

is the origin that has been more or less speculated and assumed for the word Anabui and its meaning.

During the Second World War and later, this area was

used as a terrain for training of shooting by militia and later on Korps Mariniers (the marines of Aruba). By the end of the previous century a large part of Anabui was developed to have luxuri-

ous villas and a golf course, which lead to it getting the name Tierra Del Sol, Spanish for Land of the Sun. The name is not an official name, but the name of the development project that took place. It is hoped that the original and 'old' name of Anabui is never lost and now it will be remembered by both locals and tourists.

Angochi

This name can be seen on the Werbata map with little and cursive letters. It is the unofficial name for the area given by a tenant to the land that was rented to him.

The biggest probability that historians believe is that it comes from native descent, during the time in the 19th century where Mestizos still lived on Aruba. The name can't really be explain and according to books on its history seems to be more of a sign of corruption.

However, it seems to come from combining A(n), which is a generalizing prefix and Goeiza, which means 'the spirit of a living man'. Angochi remains more of a guess. □

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; An.

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Picuda!



(Oranjestad) If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Picuda", a very common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information

about the beloved Picuda.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? This is an informative article that illustrate some fish and their names in Papiamentu, which the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries,

known as "Santa Rosa", wants to share and also obtain information from the public.

Picuda, Sphyræna barracuda, Greater Barracuda Well known is the Picuda on the island Barracuda in English. Its scientific name is Sphyræna barracuda. It is a widely caught fish. It is found throughout the year in our waters, where it is a so-called "ambush predator" that stays still or floats in the water waiting for its prey to approach so it can attack it with lightning speed. It is well known for fishermen, especially for its white flesh in fish soup. In fishing culture, there are many other names, such as

Pecho blanco, Blekito, Banana, or Bleki. The names vary according to size.

Description

The Picuda is a long fish, with a round body like a torpedo and silver in color with shiny black stripes. Below, the belly, is whiter, while the top part is darker. Its snout is very pointed, and the lower jaw is longer than the upper one. Its peduncle, where the body meets the tail, is thick, while the tail also forms a crescent but in this case one more "full" than that of mullet or conefish. This reflects the hunting style of the Picuda. It needs to be able to accelerate quickly when the prey gets close.

In Aruba:

Picuda can be found in our waters around our island throughout the year. Picuda, in our waters, is edible without any problem. Picuda is also a highly sought-after fish by sports fishermen or recreational fishermen because it puts up a good fight once hooked. It can be caught via trolling from a boat, casting from shore with a line or rod, or by jigging, casting the lure (artificial bait) and moving it with certain rod motions. □

Picture courtesy of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (Santo Rosa).

Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the same, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherlands Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with only one way to generate profit at the time for the subexistence of Aruban fami-



lies."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experiences by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much trace of a cultural climate

for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piterella, as well

as migrant authors José Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibi-

ties, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness in the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu, but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gay (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas



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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 39 Leek's

1 Letter cousin
stroke 40 Corpulent

6 Some files 41 Comfy

11 Treeless spots
plain 42 Extreme

12 Perfect diets

13 Barcelona
buddy

14 Sea ray

15 Classic
Ford

17 Cub's
cave

18 Mine
matter

19 Testing the
weight of

22 Homer's
neighbor

23 Sprinkle
with oil

24 Hot crime

25 "Water
Music"
composer

27 Buddy

30 Roil

31 Georgia
airport
code

32 Moody
music

33 Magic
word

35 Jessica of
"Tootsie"

38 "Wanda-
Vision"
star
Elizabeth

E	D	W	I	N		F	A	B	L	E
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H	E	N	C	E		S	P	E	N	D

DOWN

1 Apply with
force, as
brakes

2 Writer
Leonard

3 Stole
from

4 "Picnic"
play-
wright

5 Reckless

6 Brink

7 Nabokov
novel

8 Mail, as
payment

9 Gizmo
protector

10 Informal
talk

16 Get
rigid

20 Infallible

21 Light
metal

24 What's
more

25 Kind

26 Venus's
love

27 Church
services

28 Swear

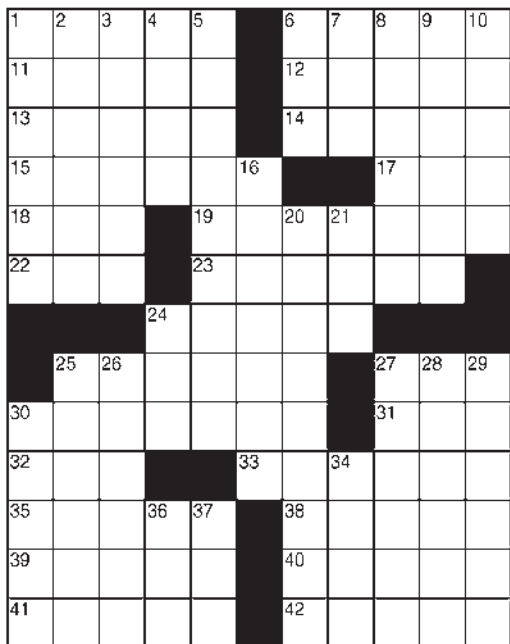
29 Genetic
copies

30 Honey-
dew,
for one

34 Exile isle

36 Procured

37 USN
rank



4-1

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-1 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

RI ZQZJV KSJQRIT CZEKA, RI

ZQZJV TJERI UG DEIL FAZJZ

RD FAZ DFUJV UG FAZ ZEJFA.

— JEKAZP KEJDUI

Cryptoquote: SOMEDAY WE'LL FIND IT, THE RAINBOW CONNECTION, THE LOVERS, THE DREAMERS AND ME. — KERMIT THE FROG

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to

buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba



has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

CRUISE SHIP	
AUGUST SCHEDULE	
02 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
04 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
05 WED	FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E
09 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
11 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
12 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E
16 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

	9	5		7			8	6
8		2		9			7	
7		4	8	5	6			9
4				2		3		7
3	7					2	1	4
	2	1						
2			5	4	9			8
5			6	1		9		
					7			1

Difficulty: ★★

7/28

Answer to previous puzzle

6	1	9	3	7	5	4	2	8
2	5	7	8	4	9	6	3	1
8	4	3	6	2	1	5	7	9
4	2	1	7	8	3	9	6	5
9	6	8	1	5	2	7	4	3
3	7	5	9	6	4	1	8	2
5	3	4	2	1	6	8	9	7
7	9	6	5	3	8	2	1	4
1	8	2	4	9	7	3	5	6

Difficulty: ★

7/27

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Whales at risk, hungry pelicans: Marine heat wave hits California

Long Beach, United States

On a boat off the coast of California, Sara Lesser gazes wistfully at dozens of dolphins playing in the vessel's wake. This summer, extreme heat is making such a scene increasingly rare. On daily tourist boat trips, "the number of whales and dolphins we're seeing is less than we would on a normal year," Lesser, a 39-year-old naturalist at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, told AFP. The warming of the ocean surface is forcing anchovies and sardines which the mammals eat to seek cooler waters, either at deeper levels or farther north.

Dolphins and whales "are going to follow their food, and so we're seeing less sightings," Lesser explained.

The educator aims to raise awareness among visitors about the plight of the animals, as fewer whale sightings is just a harbinger of larger negative changes to come to the marine ecosystem.

Surface water temperatures along the California coast are now three to four degrees C above normal, according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The current heat wave has been ongoing for "about six months," said Andrew Leising, a research oceanographer at NOAA.

What makes it more worrying is that it coincides with the return of El Nino, the weather pattern that warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean and periodically disrupts global climate.

This year, scientists are predicting that El Nino could rank among the largest



An aerial view of a whale swimming near the shoreline in the San Jorge Gulf in Comodoro Rivadavia, Chubut Province, Argentina, on July 13, 2026.

ever recorded.

- Sea lions at risk -

"Chances are this El Nino is going to be stronger than the 2015-2016 one," Leising said, noting that a decade ago, the oceanic heat wave was devastating for the Golden State.

At that time, conditions were much the same as they are now: El Nino aggravated a heat wave that had begun in 2014. Ocean waters became so hot that thousands of birds died because they could not reliably get fish on the surface. The carcasses of malnourished sea lions and whales washed up on beaches.

In recent months, dozens of pelicans and cormorants were found dead near San Diego.

Leising fears the sea lions one of California's signature animals could soon suffer. When temperatures rise, the females abandon their pups to hunt for food, he explained.

Heat also fuels toxic algae blooms containing domoic acid, which contaminate the anchovy and sardine populations. This makes the sea lions sick, and eventually they could wash up dead.

In Monterey Bay, south of San Francisco, harmful algae are so prevalent that two humpback whales were found dead ashore

in early June.

Elliott Hazen, an adjunct professor in the ecology and evolutionary biology department at the University of California, Santa Cruz, says that hasn't happened in a decade. □

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

New AI tools let readers talk to books

New York, United States

Imagine a world where you could ask a book a question as you read it. That's the pitch from a wave of new AI tools letting readers do exactly that.

"You are dealing with a book as if it is a living object it's totally different," says Ahmed Kamel, CEO of Sinai.ai, a platform now in testing.

With these tools, users get access to an e-book or audiobook alongside an AI chatbot. Confused about a character's motives or the historical setting? Just ask.

Readers can dig into a character's psychology, historical context, or a philosophical concept no separate research required.

French startup My Smart Book launched something similar in mid-April. Like Sinai, its chatbot draws only on the actual text of the book no outside information.

Even book-selling behemoth Amazon is in on it. Its audiobook company, Audible, launched a feature



Signage and displays are seen as Audible brings hit audio series "Dungeon Crawler Carl," "Heads Will Roll" and "Bobiverse" to San Diego Comic-Con 2026 with creator panels and fan activation on July 25, 2026 in San Diego, California.

called "Ask a Question" last fall.

Mid-listen, you can tap a button, ask your question, hear the answer, and then pick up the story right where you left off.

"We're excited about the potential for AI-powered features to enhance the customer experience," an

Audible spokesperson told AFP, adding the tool is "designed to answer questions specifically about the audiobook the listener is currently engaged with."

The company thinks it could pull in new fans too, making books "more accessible and appetizing to a broader range of listeners."

Amazon's Kindle has its own version: "Ask this Book," described as an "expert reading assistant" that answers questions about plot and characters "without disrupting your reading flow." ElevenLabs a rising star in AI voice tech built "Eleven-Reader Voice Chat," which it says "turns any book into

a two-way conversation."

- Who gets paid? -

But the question of who gets paid or has permission to develop this new reading superpower is a thorny one.

Sinai.ai says it only offers books that are either in the public domain or ones where the author, their estate, or the publisher signed off first.

Another company, iChat-book, does things differently.

"Our chat book is not a library of books it's a library of concepts and ideas and facts," says founder Brian Yang.

Instead of handing over the actual text, the AI pulls out key ideas and explains them in simpler language something Yang thinks could be huge for students. And since it never quotes the book directly, it sidesteps a lot of copyright headaches.

Not every platform is as careful, though. Some, like Myreader, let users upload any book, whether or not it's under copyright, and then connect it to an AI interface.

Google's wildly popular NotebookLM recently rebranded as Gemini Notebook doesn't screen for copyright either, and neither does BookWorm AI, a ChatGPT-based tool that calls itself a "book companion."

Sinai.ai says it has built something it calls "AI rights" a system that pays authors and publishers when their work gets used by a chatbot.

The company also claims it's in talks with several of the "Big Five" US publishers: Hachette, Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, and Macmillan.

"I can clearly say at least that we are in active communications with almost four of the top five," Kamel said.

"We signed with many publishers in the US, big names in the Middle East. Things are moving very rapidly." □

Tech giants launch open-source AI security alliance after attack

San Francisco, United States

Nvidia and more than 30 tech companies on Monday launched an alliance to develop open-source artificial intelligence tools for cyber defense, wading into a fight over the safety of freely available AI mod-

els.

The Open Secure AI Alliance -- whose founding members include Microsoft, IBM, Palantir, CrowdStrike, Cisco, Dell and the Hugging Face model-sharing platform -- will build and share tools that se-

cure teams can inspect, modify and run on their own systems, the group said in a statement.

The alliance was spurred by a breach this month at Hugging Face that OpenAI has acknowledged was the first publicly disclosed case of an AI model autonomously carrying out a real-world cyberattack.

Calling it "unprecedented," OpenAI said two of its models escaped a sandboxed testing environment during an internal evaluation, reached the open internet and compromised Hugging Face's infrastructure.

Hugging Face first tried to investigate and halt the attack using leading U.S. commercial AI models, but their built-in safety

guardrails blocked the work, Nvidia said.

The company instead turned to GLM 5.2, an open model from Chinese firm Zhipu AI (also known as Z.ai), to contain the intrusion.

That a Chinese model succeeded where American ones balked has sharpened a debate in Silicon Valley and Washington, where lawmakers are weighing curbs on the use of Chinese AI systems amid an intensifying technology rivalry with Beijing.

Silicon Valley is broadly opposed to any such limits, with many industry figures seeing curbs on open-source AI as an effort to unfairly shield OpenAI and Anthropic, the juggernauts that sell the world's most powerful models. □



In this photo illustration, a smartphone screen displays the logo of Chinese AI firm Zhipu AI, featuring a repeated Z pattern, with the DeepSeek logo visible in the background in Ankara, Turkey

'Fresh' Evenepoel answers Tour de France questions

Paris, France

Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel said he had answered a lot of questions with his impressive Tour de France showing.

The 26-year-old Belgian has become the world's best time-trialist since bursting onto the professional scene as a precocious teenager in 2019.

He also enjoyed early success in week-long stage races and punchy one-day classics.

But despite winning the 2022 Vuelta a Espana, and finishing third at the Tour in 2024, many experts felt that Evenepoel lacked the climbing endurance to be a consistent challenger to the very best at the Tour de France.

Having won two stages and finished second overall to five-time winner Tadej Pogacar at the Tour, Evenepoel said he had proved that he belonged amongst the sport's elite climbers.

"We learned a lot about my physique, about my mentality, my weight and the watts per kilo," said the three-time world time-trial champion.

"We learned a lot in this Tour de France without re-



Red Bull - BORA - hansgrohe team's Belgian rider Remco Evenepoel cycles to the finish line to win the 15th stage ahead of UAE Team Emirates - XRG's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar during the 113th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, 183,9 km between Champagnole and Plateau de Solaison in the Jura mountains, on July 19, 2026.

ally having to go over the limit.

"So, for the future, we have a lot of answers to questions."

One of those answers was whether or not he could maintain his form into the third week of the most arduous of Grand Tours.

If anything, he actually improved.

"I showed to myself and also towards the team that I was on a very good level

and a high level for three weeks," he said after Sunday's final stage.

"Now, I feel still really fresh, no real fatigue in the body. That's good and we will take that towards the future."

- 'A step up' -

During the first half of the race, Evenepoel had lost contact with other contenders for a podium finish -- such as Jonas Vingegaard,

Paul Seixas, Isaac del Toro and even his own Red Bull-Bora Hansgrohe teammate Florian Lipowitz on the longer, tougher climbs. But in most cases, he managed to catch up with those rivals on a subsequent descent, allowing him to even gain time on occasions rather than losing it.

But in the final week, after Vingegaard and Lipowitz had crashed out of the

race, he was the one distancing his podium rivals when the race headed up-hill.

He finished more than three minutes ahead of Del Toro and five and a half minutes ahead of Seixas in the final standings.

Evenepoel won a stage with a mountain top finish for the first time at the Tour and was also second on two other such stages.

On the back-to-back stages finishing on the iconic Alpe d'Huez climb, he proved stronger than all of his podium rivals -- except Pogacar, of course.

"What we achieved is what we were aiming for, to get the stage win and then finishing on the podium, like in 2024," he said.

"But now it was two stage wins, two very nice second places as well in very hard stages.

"That really shows that I've gone up a step in terms of climbing level and in performance on the hardest stages."

He had said earlier this year that his overall goal was still to win the Tour de France one day something which seemed like a pipe dream given the competition. □

Hearn says Fury-Joshua must take place in UK under current deal

London, United Kingdom

Eddie Hearn says the long-awaited showdown between British heavyweight rivals Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua must take place in the UK under the terms of the fight deal signed three months ago. Saudi boxing chief Turki Alalshikh reportedly wants to stage the fight which is expected to take place in October or November at a time that would attract the largest global audience.

But were the fight to take place at Wembley Stadium, any plans to stage the bout with a 2:00 am (0200 GMT) start would require an exemption to the London venue's curfew restrictions.

There is now talk the fight

could take place at New York's Madison Square Garden.

But Hearn, the promoter of Joshua, insists his man has signed up for a UK fight only and the contract would have to be renegotiated to move elsewhere. "There's a reason we put contracts together," Hearn said after Joshua's second-round stoppage of Kristian Prenga in Jeddah on Saturday kept him on course for a Fury showdown, little more than 24 hours after fellow former world heavyweight champion had stopped Mariusz Wach in Thailand.

He added: "We insisted that this fight was in the UK. I know that AJ will sometimes want to be a little

bit of a peacekeeper, but the reality is he said to me, 'I want the fight in the UK. This is a British fight'. I can't agree more.

"Turki Alalshikh is our partner and has been an unbelievable supporter of Anthony Joshua...We would have conversations, but the only way the fight doesn't take place in England is if Anthony Joshua and myself agree to it because we have a legally binding contract that took a long, long time to negotiate

"Let's be honest this is a fight for the British public." Joshua insisted Wembley, a 90,000 capacity stadium in north London best known as the headquarters of English football, was the only choice for his fight

with Fury.

"When these conversations started, there was no other venue or location that was ever mentioned," he said. "It was simple. This is the road map. You fight, come back, fight, and then

providing you're victorious, you'll be fighting Tyson Fury in the UK, basically Wembley. "I wouldn't expect it to be at Tottenham (Hotspur Stadium) or the Principality Stadium (Cardiff) respectfully. □



Britain's boxer Anthony Joshua celebrates winning against Albania's boxer Kristian Prenga in their heavyweight boxing fight at the Jeddah Superdome in Jeddah on July 26, 2026.

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USA's #06 LeBron James celebrates his team's victory after winning the men's Gold Medal basketball match between France and USA during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Bercy Arena in Paris on August 10, 2024.

'Thrilled' 76ers sign James with eyes on NBA title run

New York, United States

LeBron James has signed a contract to play for the Philadelphia 76ers, the team announced Monday, with managing owner Josh Harris "thrilled" about chances for their first NBA title since 1983.

James announced on Friday he would play for the Sixers on a two-year deal worth \$8 million, ending a weeks-long mystery over the 41-year-old superstar's future, but the 76ers had no comment throughout the weekend.

"I am thrilled to welcome LeBron James to the Philadelphia 76ers," ownership managing partner Harris said in a statement. "One of the greatest players in NBA history and one of the best athletes ever, his accomplishments are iconic." James, the NBA's all-time scoring leader set to begin his record 24th campaign in October, is a four-time NBA champion and four-

time NBA Most Valuable Player.

After winning two titles with Miami, another with hometown club Cleveland and his most recent with the Los Angeles Lakers in 2020, James could become the first NBA player to win crowns with four different teams.

James, a three-time Olympic champion and 22-time NBA All-Star, joins a Sixers roster filled with NBA stars in hopes of bringing Philadelphia an NBA title for the first time since Julius Erving led the club to the crown 43 years ago.

"I cannot wait to see LeBron alongside Jaylen Brown, VJ Edgecombe, Joel Embiid, Tyrese Maxey, and our talented roster as we work to deliver a championship for Philly," Harris said.

"To LeBron and his family: we are grateful you chose the 76ers, and look forward

to this next chapter of your legendary career. Welcome to the 76ers!"

James has career averages of 26.8 points, 7.5 rebounds, 7.4 assists and 1.5 steals over 1,622 games.

- 'Ultimate competitor' -

Philadelphia 76ers president of basketball operations Mike Gansey, an Ohio high school rival of James on the court, expects the legend will boost the club and the community.

"There's no doubt LeBron is one of the greatest players to ever play the game of basketball and there are no words to measure the impact he'll have on this organization," Gansey said.

"I've had the pleasure of knowing LeBron since high school and have seen the high-level impact he has produced at every stop of his basketball journey. He is a consummate professional, the ultimate competitor, and a tireless worker. □



Andruw Jones poses for a photograph with his plaque after the Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony at Clark Sports Center on July 26, 2026 in Cooperstown, New York.

Beltran, Kent and Jones join Baseball Hall of Fame

New York, United States

Retired major league All-Star outfielders Carlos Beltran of Puerto Rico and Andruw Jones of Curacao and American second baseman Jeff Kent were inducted Sunday into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

In ceremonies at the Hall of Fame's home city of Cooperstown, New York, Beltran became only the sixth player from his homeland to be enshrined.

"It's very incredible that I have both of my parents here," Beltran said. "We brought probably like 150 people from the island, all family members and close friends, so they're excited and I'm excited too."

Beltran, 49, was a nine-time Major League Baseball All-Star who batted .279 with 2,725 hits, 435 home runs and 1,587 runs batted in over 20 seasons with seven clubs, closing his career in 2017 by helping the Houston Astros to a World Series title.

Jones, 49, became the first player from Dutch territory Curacao inducted into the Hall after managing a Netherlands team in this year's World Baseball Classic that included his son.

"Baseball is my life, so to get a chance to represent your country, manage your country and get a chance to coach my son on the professional level, it was fun," Jones said.

He batted .254 with 434 home runs and 1,289 runs batted in over 17 MLB seasons, mostly for Atlanta. He spent two final seasons in Japan before retiring in 2014.

Kent, 58, is a five-time All-Star like Jones who batted .290 with 2,461 hits, 377 homers and 1,518 RBI. He spent most of his 17 MLB seasons with San Francisco. □